

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 703

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3193

FOR LANDE, NEA/PAB, ONLY FROM CONSTABLE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, US
SUBJECT: REQUEST BY OPPOSITION LEADER FOR ASSISTANCE IN
TRANSMITTING LETTER

1. WE'D APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON A SENSITIVE PROBLEM WHICH HAS ARISEN HERE IN LAST FEW DAYS.
 2. LAST WEEK OMAR KASURI, A TEHRIK-I-ISTEQLAL FIGURE AND SON OF JAILED PARTY LEADER MEHMUD ALI KASURI, APPROACHED A LAHORE CONGEN OFFICER AT HIS HOME AND INFORMED HIM THAT AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN WISHED TO SEND A LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER. OMAR KASURI SAID HE HAD VISITED ASGHAR IN JAIL, WHERE IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE APPROACHED, IF POSSIBLE, WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HE ASKED IF THE AIR MARSHAL'S LETTER COULD BE SENT THROUGH OFFICIAL USG CHANNELS. HE SAID THE OPPOSITION FEARED IT MIGHT BE DISCLOSED PREMATURELY WITHIN PAKISTAN UNLESS IT WAS HANDLED THIS WAY. LAHORE ASKED THE EMBASSY FOR INSTRUCTIONS.
 3. IN LIGHT OF THE WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT THE US IS SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION, AND THE FACT THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO ENTER INTO VERY IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS WITH BHUTTO, WE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO ENCOURAGE KASURI TO LOOK TO THE EMBASSY FOR ASSISTANCE IN TRANSMITTING OPPOSITION VIEWS. AT THE SAME
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TIME, WE WANTED HIM TO KNOW--AND WE CONSIDERED THIS JUST AS IMPORTANT--THAT WE CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THE AIR MARSHAL'S DESIRE TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. WE INSTRUCTED LAHORE TO STRESS THIS SECOND POINT, AND TO GO ON TO TELL KASURI THAT OUR DIPLOMATIC POUCH IS USED FOR OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN POSTS OVERSEAS AND WASHINGTON AND FOR OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT

CORRESPONDENCE. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS OUR PRACTICE NOT TO ACCEPT PERSONALLY, FOR SENDING VIA POUCH, NON-OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE USG. WHEN FOREIGN NATIONALS WANT TO WRITE THE PRESIDENT, WE SAID, SUCH MAIL IS THEREFORE GENERALLY SENT VIA THE INTERNATIONAL POST.

4. WE FURTHER INSTRUCTED LAHORE THAT SHOULD KASURI PRESS STRONGLY ON USING OUR SERVICES TO FORWARD THE LETTER, AND RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF MAILING THE ASGHAR KHAN LETTER TO THE EMBASSY FOR FORWARDING, THE OFFICER SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT WE SOMETIMES USE THE POUCH TO FORWARD MAIL--WHICH IS RECEIVED IN THE EMBASSY AND ADDRESSED TO THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR--TO HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. LAHORE WAS INSTRUCTED TO TELL KASURI IF HE PRESSED THE POINT THAT A LETTER FROM THE AIR MARSHAL WOULD BE THE KIND OF CORRESPONDENCE WE WOULD NORMALLY FORWARD.

5. IN HIS SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH KASURI, THE LAHORE OFFICER CARRIED OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS OUTLINED IN PARA 3 ABOVE, KASURI DID NOT PRESS ALONG THE LINES IN PARA 4. HE SAID AGAIN THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN WAS TO PREVENT A LEAK BEFORE THE MESSAGE REACHES THE PRESIDENT, AND IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT THEY DESIRE TO SEND IT THROUGH USG CHANNELS. GETTING IT TO THE PRESIDENT AT THE PROPER, OFFICIAL LEVEL, THEY FEEL, IS THE ONLY WAY TO INSURE THIS. HE ASSERTED THAT THE OPPOSITION HAD NO INTENTION OF LEAKING THE LETTER THEMSELVES, WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE DISASTROUS. THEIR AIM, HE SAID, WAS TO GET IT TO THE PRESIDENT AND LET HIM DECIDE HOW HE WISHED TO HANDLE IT. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. KASURI THEN TALKED VAGUELY ABOUT GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US FOREIGN SERVICE FRIENDS ELSEWHERE TO GET THE LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, BUT SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE ADVICE THAT THIS WOULD BE UNWISE. HE SAID HE MIGHT PROCEED TO WASHINGTON IF THE AIR MARSHAL APPROVED AND TRY TO GET THE MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT THROUGH VARIOUS PAKISTANI AND AMERICAN CONTACTS. THE CONGEN OFFICER TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS, OF COURSE, PERFECTLY FREE TO DO SO.

7. THERE MATTERS STAND, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. WE HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA WHAT ASGHAR KHAN AND HIS FRIENDS WILL DO, NOR FOR THAT MATTER, WHAT THE LETTER MIGHT CONTAIN. (KASURI, WHO APPEARS TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN A COURIER, SAID HE WASN'T SURE, ONLY THAT IT WOULD BE ABOUT THE PRESENT SITUATION IN PAKISTAN). WE BELIEVE THAT KASURI IS SINCERE WHEN HE SAYS THAT ONLY THE USE OF USG CHANNELS WILL INSURE THAT THE LETTER GETS TO THE PRESIDENT. WE ARE LESS CERTAIN THAT HE AND OTHERS ARE AS CONCERNED AS THEY MAINTAIN ABOUT THE DANGERS TO THEM

OF A LEAK.

8. IT WILL OBVIOUSLY BE IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST TO AVOID A SITUATION INVOLVING KASURI'S TURNING UP IN WASHINGTON, ALLEGING (INCORRECTLY) THAT HE HAD TO COME PERSONALLY BECAUSE OF US EMBASSY STONEWALLING. AT THE SAME TIME, SHOULD HE PRESS FURTHER TO USE THE EMBASSY CHANNEL AND BRING UP THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING THE LETTER TO THE AMBASSADOR FOR FORWARDING, WE WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO TELL HIM THAT IN LIGHT OF THE SITUATION HERE WE WOULD WANT TO INFORM THE GOP THAT WE HAD RECEIVED THE MESSAGE AND HAD SENT IT ON. (WE WOULD NOT, OF COURSE, DISCLOSE ITS CONTENTS.)

9. IT OCCURS TO US AS WE FACE THIS QUANDARY THAT WE HAVE FACED SIMILAR TOUGH PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE, AND THAT PERHAPS SOME STANDARD PROCEDURE HAD BEEN OR IS BEING WORKED OUT AS TO HOW THEY SHOULD BE HANDLED. WE WOULD HOPE THAT YOU WOULD
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BE ABLE IN THIS CONTEXT TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ABOUT HOW WE COULD MOST EFFECTIVELY PROCEED.
BYROADE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Sent Date: 04-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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To: STATE
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